

# Baby Teeth are Important!

I will do these things to help my baby's teeth:

- ☐ Avoid sharing germs (spoons, straws, licking pacifiers) so I don't pass cavity germs to my baby. Kissing is OK.
- ☐ Wipe teeth and gums after every feeding and especially before bed.
- ☐ Not put my baby to bed with a bottle.
- ☐ Look for changes in tooth color. Healthy teeth should be all one color.
- ☐ Make a dental visit for my baby and me.

My baby's firsts:

First smile: \_\_\_\_\_

First tooth: \_\_\_\_\_

Drank from a cup: \_\_\_\_\_ (Goal is before age 1.)

Dental visit: \_\_\_\_\_ (Goal is age 1.)



For more information, call  
1-800-232-1676 or visit [www.azdhs.gov](http://www.azdhs.gov).  
If your child is on AHCCCS or KidsCare,  
dental visits are covered.

A guide to oral health for your baby's first year.

# ARE YOU PASSING TOOTH DECAY TO YOUR BABY?



# Protect Your Baby's Teeth in the First Year.

Your baby is born with 20 little teeth growing under the gums. You can't see them. But they are there! You can't see germs either. But they are there, too.

## Did you know?

### Germs + Sugar = Tooth Decay

- **Tooth decay is an infection.** Germs and sugary food left in a baby's mouth can eat holes in the teeth called cavities.
- **You pass germs** on to your baby when you share food, forks, spoons, straws, or toothbrushes. Licking a pacifier covers it with your germs, too!
- **Sugar** is in many foods, including breast milk, formula, baby food, juice, and soda.

## Take care of your baby's mouth right from the start.

- **Clean your baby's gums** and any teeth after feeding and at bedtime. Use a clean, damp washcloth or child's soft toothbrush. You can wipe away food and even germs. Do this even if you can't see the teeth yet.
- **Avoid passing germs** to your baby's mouth. Don't put a spoon, a pacifier, or a toothbrush in your mouth before giving it to your baby. Ask grandparents or daycare providers not to share germs, too.
- **Visit the dentist** to get your teeth and gums cleaned. This will cut down on the germs in your mouth, leaving less germs to pass on to your baby. If you don't have insurance, call ACTION at 1-866-340-4337.



*Maria brushes away tooth decay germs.*

## Your baby's first tooth.

- **Look for your baby's first tooth at about 6 months.**
- **Schedule your baby's first dental visit** around their first birthday. Starting dental visits early can prevent costly dental care later. If your baby is on the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) or KidsCare, dental visits are covered.
- **Look at your baby's gums and teeth** at least once a month. Healthy teeth should be all one color. See a dentist if you see white or brown spots or stains on your baby's teeth.

## What else can I do to help my baby's teeth?

- Don't dip your baby's pacifier in anything sweet, like sugar or honey.
- Never put your baby to sleep with a bottle.
- Remember to clean your baby's gums and teeth after they eat.
- Don't give your baby sweet drinks. Wean your baby from the bottle by age one.